

The STAR Method Guide

When an interviewer asks “Tell me about a time when...”, they're looking for a real example, not a general statement. The STAR method helps you give a clear, structured answer that highlights your skills and the impact you had. It's an easy way to structure your answers and show actual examples in interviews. These are examples from your previous jobs.

What Is STAR?

Letter	Stands for	What to cover
S	Situation	Set the scene - where were you, what was happening?
T	Task	What were you responsible for or what needed to be done?
A	Action	What specific steps did you take?
R	Result	What happened as a result? Use numbers or outcomes if you can.

Worked Example

Question: “Tell me about a time you dealt with a difficult customer.”

- Situation: “While working as a checkout operator, a customer became frustrated because a promotion wasn't applying at the till.”
- Task: “I needed to resolve the issue quickly without holding up the queue, while keeping the customer happy.”
- Action: “I calmly explained I'd check the promotion details, called my supervisor over to confirm, and offered the customer the discount manually once approved.”
- Result: “The customer left happy, the queue kept moving, and my supervisor mentioned afterwards that I'd handled it really well.”

Common Questions You Can Answer With STAR

- Tell me about a time you went above and beyond
- Describe a situation where you had to work under pressure or to a deadline
- Tell me about a time you made a mistake - how did you handle it?
- Describe a time you worked as part of a team to achieve something
- Tell me about a time you had to learn something new quickly
- Describe a time you disagreed with a colleague or manager - how did you handle it?

Tips for Strong STAR Answers

- Keep it focused and brief (normally 1–2 minutes is usually enough)
- Use real examples, even if they feel small, specific examples beats impressive ones
- Focus on YOUR actions, even if it was a team effort (“I suggested...”, “I organised...”).
- Always try to finish with a result, even if it's something you learned.
- Prepare 3–4 stories in advance that you can adapt to different questions - see the Interview Prep Worksheet